

6 What Happened?

A world designed specifically for you, a spouse whom you adore and who adores you, a plan for a family that will grow dynamically, fulfilling tasks and pleasurable food. On top of all that, a relationship with the Creator that reflects His love and power. The created world was very good. But when we look at the families of today, we want to ask, “What happened?”

It’s true, the world we see today does not look like what is described in the first two chapters of Genesis. Modern families are full of greed, lust, and disrespect. A married couple joyously living together and raising well-behaved, thriving children seems like a fantasy. In some communities more than half the children are growing up in single-parent homes. Absent fathers leave gaping holes in their children’s hearts. Violence is the norm in some neighborhoods, and in some homes, too.

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We read about the “good” creation and look at today’s world and ask, “If God is who He says He is, why is the world like this?” Because we don’t understand Genesis chapter 3, we feel hopeless. But we have hope because God **is** who He says He is.

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Genesis chapter 3 is pivotal in the history of families. It contains the first temptation, first lie, first unholy desires, first sin, and first death. James clearly explains the effect of man's fall on us:

*“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and **sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.** Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”¹*

First Temptation

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Genesis 3:1-2

“Why does this reptile talk to Eve like that? Who does he think he is?” It's a fair question, often asked with indignation. In Revelation, John identifies “that serpent of old” as the Devil and Satan.² People often ask “Where did Satan come from?” Usually this question is an excuse to not deal with our own sin, but here is the answer: Satan was created by God as a perfect angel, with authority and responsibility in the heavens. Ezekiel describes Satan's perfection and position before he sinned.³ He also had free will, as do all the angels and men. He allowed pride and envy to distort him, and his desire became to usurp God.⁴ Jesus told the Jews that the devil was a liar and murderer⁵ from the beginning.⁶

How did Eve learn about this tree? God commanded Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and

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evil before she was built.⁷ Paul said that Adam's prior creation established authority over the woman,⁸ and Adam demonstrated his authority by naming her. I believe Adam taught Eve not to eat that fruit.

The serpent asked "Has God indeed said...?" to make Eve doubt Adam's word. Satan still attacks families by questioning the authority and word of the husband and father. Today's American culture constantly attacks husbands and fathers. The media portrays married men as weak, ignorant, silly, evil, cruel, undisciplined, irresponsible or all of the above. And it's interesting that the heroes of most tales told by today's entertainment are women or single men whose strengths include having any woman they want. Rarely will you see a man who is living like a son of God. And men have accepted it as reality, not leading their families bravely, but following wherever the world takes them.

Eating the fruit was secondary. In his own pride and desire for more authority, Satan wanted Eve to rebel against authority and order as he had. Satan sought to usurp Adam, and succeeded.

First Lie

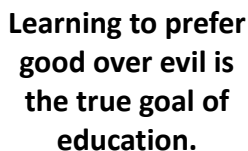
Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Genesis 3:1-5

After Eve repeated Adam's instructions, Satan replied with "You will not surely die." This outright contradiction of God's word probably would have brought a rebuke from Adam, who heard the command from God Himself. However, by going to Eve, Satan went around Adam's authority.

Satan also attacked God's character. God had created man in His image, with authority to rule the earth. He designed marriage to make them both more like Him. But

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Satan told Eve that God did not want her to be like Him, making the Holy One seem selfish and prideful, concerned with protecting His position. The fruit from this tree held the secrets that God wanted to keep to Himself. By eating it, she could be like God. This is the same attitude Lucifer revealed when he fell, *“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”*⁹



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education.**

Satan told Eve the knowledge of good and evil was the secret to being like God. But learning to discern between good and evil is only part of the process of developing godliness. Learning to prefer good over evil is the true goal of education.

All that is in the World

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. Genesis 3:6

The Apostle John categorized all the world's temptations into three types: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.¹⁰ Every sin that man commits is a result of one of these desires. The first temptation established the pattern for all those that followed.

Eve first decided that the fruit of this tree was good for food. She probably wasn't hungry, they could eat from all the other trees in the garden, but Satan's lie made this one more desirable for the benefit and pleasure of the flesh. The lust of the flesh, the desire for pleasure, was now established.

Eve then considered this fruit a desirable thing to possess (pleasant to the eyes). The lust of the eyes is greed. Solomon associated the eyes' desire with greed¹¹ and in Proverbs 23:6-7 identifies the man with an evil eye as a miser who cannot

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part with his possessions. Again, it's not like Eve needed anything, everything but Adam was under her authority. If you have authority over something, you don't need to possess it. Solomon described it this way, "*Better is the sight of the eyes* (being content with what is present) *than the wandering of desire.*"¹²

Eve's third misconception was that the fruit could make one wise. The pride of life includes the assumption that we are wise just by virtue of our existence, without gaining wisdom through the process of living. Our goal should be the contentment of being involved in God's processes under proper authority, not grasping for more than we need for godliness. Paul instructed Timothy that "*godliness with contentment is great gain.*"¹³

God planned for man to understand good and evil by not eating from that tree. Satan circumvented God's purposes by offering a shortcut to that knowledge, a false opportunity to understand like God does. He offered Eve the option to decide to be wise, to be like God. The Devil knew the outcome of this thinking because he had already done it.

I especially like Elisabeth Elliot's take on this in her book, "Let Me Be a Woman":

"What sort of world might it have been if Eve had refused the serpent's offer and said to him instead, 'Let me not be like God. Let me be what I was made to be – let me be a woman.'"¹⁴

First Sin

"*She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.*" Genesis 3:6

In Romans chapter 5 and 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul says human sin and death originated with Adam. If Adam's offense passed sin and death to all of us, what about Eve? Why isn't she responsible for all this trouble? Paul tells us in

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1 Timothy 2:14 that Eve was deceived, but Adam was not.¹⁵ Could Adam have done something other than eat the fruit Eve gave him? God apparently expected something different from Adam. Eve disobeyed Adam, but Adam disobeyed God.

Sharing ...or Leading?

We already explained that one goal of the temptation was to draw Eve out from Adam's authority. What was Adam's sin? He ate the fruit. But God identifies a deeper problem in Genesis 3:17 when he is introducing Adam's curse.

*Then to Adam He said, "**Because you have heeded the voice of your wife**, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it...'"*

Adam knowingly ate the fruit because his wife had already eaten it. She must have convinced him because God condemned Adam for heeding her voice. He followed her into the transgression instead of leading her away from it and back to God.

God expresses respect for a husband's authority later in the Law. Numbers chapter 30 explains the authority and responsibility of a man for his wife and unmarried daughters. If a wife or unmarried daughter made a vow or contract, religious or otherwise, the husband/father had the right to disallow it when he heard it. He had to actively disallow it on the day he heard it, otherwise he was responsible for it before God and man.

Adam did not have to eat the fruit. But where would that have left Eve? We can consider a lot of "what-ifs" about this, but I believe Jesus showed us what Adam could have done. Jesus gave Himself for His church and now intercedes for us. That is what I believe Adam could have done in his God-ordained authority. He could have gone to God and interceded for his wife, and offered to take the punishment for her transgression himself, the pure for the impure.

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Not only did Adam eat from that tree, he did not fulfill his responsibility to operate in his God-given authority.

Good and Evil

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.
Genesis 3:7

The first sign of the onset of death was shame. Adam and Eve were not ashamed of themselves or each other,¹⁶ but their first reaction after eating the fruit was to cover their own nakedness from each other. Their lack of clothing had not changed, only their perception of it. Now their shame was a reminder of their disobedience, a sign that they were corrupted and needed to be covered. The Hebrew word for “knew” means to ascertain by seeing; their sin could be seen, so they attempted to cover their nakedness with aprons of leaves.

Their lack of clothing had not changed, only their perception of it.

Shame

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
Genesis 3:8

They could tell that their aprons were not adequate to keep their evil from being discovered, so they hid from the all-knowing Creator. They understood that they would be required by God’s loving justice to die for their sin; indeed, their relationships with each other and with God were dead.

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Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Genesis 3:9-13

Habakkuk said that God will not behold evil or look on wickedness,¹⁷ so we understand why He asked Adam where he was. God is not unable to see, but He chooses not look on evil. Adam had to declare himself since God already perceived what they had done. They could not hide their sin, it exposed them. In answer to God's conviction, Adam confessed that the woman had given the fruit, and he ate. God then questioned Eve, and she admitted that she was deceived and ate the fruit.

Curses

God did not question the serpent, He knew Satan was in full rebellion,¹⁸ and the judgment was direct.

So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." Genesis 3:14-15

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The judgments from God in Genesis 3 have both physical and spiritual effects. Just as Satan was manifested in the serpent, Satan's curse is also manifested in snakes.

Satan was cursed more than all creation, and his condemnation was prepared for all his followers also.¹⁹ Snakes are cursed more than all other animals. They now crawl on their bellies, licking the dust. The Bible doesn't tell us what snakes looked like before this, but they may have had legs, and probably did not stick their tongue out to taste and smell their surroundings. Eve was not repulsed by the appearance of Satan's snake in the garden, but nearly every woman since then has had an adverse reaction to snakes, and most men will gladly kill a snake that is in their home uninvited.

In the spiritual realm, God proclaims that His Chosen One, the Seed of the woman, will overcome Satan, but that Satan will physically wound Him. We will study the importance of this prophecy in the next chapter.

To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Genesis 3:16

After promising that the woman's children would overcome the snake's children, God addresses how these children will be produced. God's original command to multiply and fill the earth was pretty simple when no one was going to die, but now that death was required, mankind would need to reproduce more. Eve's physical body probably changed to meet the need for more reproduction after the curse. The pain of childbirth was introduced along with the sorrow, including the grief associated with raising and possibly losing children.

The second part of the woman's curse concerned her position in the dominion. Because she chose to go outside her husband's authority, she will always desire his position. This phrase is the same phrase used in chapter 4 when God

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explains to Cain the desire of sin to overcome him and his responsibility to rule over it.²⁰

Man is the rightful ruler of the family. This does not give men the right to abuse women, but rather the responsibility to exercise loving leadership. His duty is to protect and serve. It also does not mean that women are less important to God; Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28 that there is no

**God has a keen
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difference in their spiritual value.²¹

God has a keen interest in women because He had to come in the flesh through a woman since sin is passed on to all people by Adam and his sons. The Holy Spirit conceived Jesus so the Seed of the woman would be a sinless sacrifice;

someone produced by man's seed could not be the righteous payment for all sin.²²

The Beginning of Corruption

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Genesis 3:17

God cursed the serpent and woman without explanation, but He explained to Adam his responsibility for what happened. Adam should have led his family, but he followed. He should have abstained, but he ate. He should have exercised dominion over the serpent, but he abdicated it. He should have exercised self-control, but he chose instant gratification. He should have heeded God's command, but he listened to his wife.

The curse fulfills the punishment identified in the command.

"Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns

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and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” Genesis 3:18-19

The curse on the ground “for your sake” was a widespread corruption of the created world. Adam’s sin did not just affect him, nor just his family, but the entire earth. Paul told the Romans that all of creation is subject to decay because of man’s sin.²³ Instead of easily eating fruit from the trees he tended, Adam must work to grow and eat the herbs of the field. And it won’t be easy, the ground will now work against him, inedible and prickly weeds will grow from the ground with his crops.

The spiritual aspect of this curse is most important. Not only will Adam’s body need the daily bread gained through toil, but his relationship with God Almighty will also require toil. Knowing and understanding God will be hard because of sin, and men will need to toil for what had once been freely received. Throughout Scripture, God calls His Word bread for the spirit and soul.²⁴ Jesus, as the Word of God, called Himself the Bread of Life.²⁵ When He included the need for daily bread in the pattern for prayer,²⁶ did He also mean daily communication with God? Paul acknowledges that leaders in the church should labor for the word.²⁷ Sin became a barrier to Adam and Eve’s relationship and communication with God.

Toil

Adam was created on the sixth day, was placed in the garden, received God’s blessings and authority, and did some really important work. On the seventh day God rested, and because of the commandment to keep the sabbath²⁸ we can guess that Adam’s first whole day of existence was spent in rest.

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Adam's physical properties changed like Eve's. His body must keep itself cool from the heat generated by labor. Sweat is part of this process, a cooling mechanism that fights decay and removes wastes. Toil is a price of his disobedience, and sweat reminds us that we must work to eat.²⁹

Death

The Hebrew phrase in Genesis 2:17 is literally “die-die,”³⁰ and is normally translated “you will surely die” or “dying you will die.” The repetition of the word indicates a process; death became a part of life. Corruption will also act on man's body, decaying it through death until it is dust, the basic component of our form, just like the ground from which it came.

Farmers, gardeners and forest rangers understand that the bodies of living things decay and leave their elements in the soil to feed plants that feed other living bodies. My father, a lifelong farmer, understood this well. He once told me that his preference was to be buried out in the cornfield without a casket so his body could more quickly return to the soil and feed the crops.³¹

God's introduction of death as the penalty for sin may seem harsh, but disobedience is no small matter.

Eve

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. Genesis 3:20

By giving his wife a specific name, Adam acknowledged the justice of the curse in two ways. He ruled over her by giving her a specific name instead of the general term “woman.” He gave her a name that acknowledged the increase of her childbearing.

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Coverings

Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

Adam and Eve made themselves aprons of leaves, God made them coats of skins. Man's attempt to hide his sin was ineffective and inadequate. It wasn't enough to just cover the private parts; sin defiles the whole man and requires a more complete covering. God prescribed more clothes than man was inclined to wear because He knew what lure the human body would have on the heart. His design for clothing was a complete covering provided from an innocent sacrifice. He made tunics, or coats, to show them how to cover their nakedness, and how much should be covered. The “tunic” in Hebrew culture was “neck to knee.”

This clothing was not made with wool or hair, but of skin, the same Hebrew word is used for hides or leather. A beast, or a pair of beasts, had to be slaughtered to make these garments from skins. God killed and skinned an animal to cover Adam and Eve. The first sacrifice for sin was prophetic, pointing to the righteous requirement of judgment that Jesus Christ would abolish.³² Until then, men must shed the blood of innocent animals to cover their sin. Hebrews chapter 10 tells us that animal sacrifices cannot take away sins. The covering of sins by the blood of animals was not totally effective, because it had to be done again and again.³³

This first physical death may have been terribly permanent. If God only created one male and one female of each kind, and the fall happened soon after the creation before the various “clean” animals³⁴ could reproduce, this sacrifice was the first extinction. Unless the selected animals had time to reproduce, they were permanently removed from the new creation. The horror of that knowledge put an extra burden on the sinners.

Exile

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. Genesis 3:22-24

After Adam sinned he still had access to the trees of the garden, including the tree of life. Ezekiel and John both describe the tree of life and note the healing properties of its leaves.³⁵ If Adam used the tree of life to eat or for healing, he would continue to live in His sinful condition, physically and spiritually separated from God. So God drove Adam and Eve away from the trees from which they could freely eat, and sent them to till the ground from which he was taken, cursed with thorns and thistles and toil.

He posted an angelic guard on the road to the garden so Adam's family could not return to eat from the tree of life. This guardian was in position until the flood which destroyed the garden of Eden with the rest of the earth. God also put a flaming, moving sword on the path to the tree. The symbolism is rich: the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, the fire of the presence of God, turning to the north, south, east and west... it's more than we can cover in this book.³⁶

Weapons, first created by God in response to man's sin, are designed for protection and judgment. God created this first flaming sword to show His mercy, allowing death to bring an end to sin in our lives. Paul explained that "*he who has died has been freed from sin.*"³⁷ The only way for man to be released from the physical toil and torment caused by sin is for physical death to end it. The knowledge of good and evil acquired by sin has eternal consequence; the spiritual

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judgment for sin must be delivered later, once and for all.

Altered Relationships

The created world changed after the fall, but Adam's sin drastically effected his relationships. He must rule his wife but she will strive with him. He and his children will hate serpents and sacrifice some of the other animals for their own sin. He will have to toil because the earth will give him thorns and thistles. Worst of all, his relationship with God is now defined by shame and fear.

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Applications

1. "Satan still attacks families by questioning the authority and word of the husband and father." How does this happen today? Give an example of how these attacks on families affected you or someone you know. What can you do to guard and fight against it?
2. "Learning to prefer good over evil is the true goal of education." How do we move from learning to discern good and evil to learning to prefer good? What are the consequences of not learning this lesson, personally and globally?
3. "John categorized all the world's temptations into three types: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Where do you see these three issues in your temptations? How do you overcome them?
4. How were the man's and woman's bodies changed after the fall? How do those changes still reflect God's image?
5. How does the flaming sword show God's mercy? Why was it important that man should die because of sin?

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1 James 1:14-16, bold letters mine.

2 Revelation 20:2

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- 3 Ezekiel 28:12-15
- 4 Ezekiel 28:15-17, also Isaiah 14:12-14
- 5 John 8:44
- 6 The best treatise I have read on the condition and position of Satan is "The Cleansing of the Heavens" by Mark C. Roser, published by Treasure House, 1998.
- 7 Genesis 2:16-17
- 8 1 Timothy 2:12-14
- 9 Isaiah 14:14
- 10 1 John 2:16
- 11 Proverb 27:20, Ecclesiastes 1:8 and 4:8
- 12 Ecclesiastes 6:9, parenthetical comment is mine; the rest of the verse says, "This also is vanity and grasping for the wind."
- 13 1 Timothy 6:6
- 14 "Let Me Be A Woman", Elisabeth Elliot, Tyndale House Publishers, page 16.
- 15 1 Timothy 2:14
- 16 Genesis 2:25
- 17 Habakkuk 1:13
- 18 1 Timothy 3:6 identifies pride as the devil's downfall: "...not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil."
- 19 Matthew 25:44
- 20 Genesis 4:7
- 21 "... there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- 22 The first nine and a half chapters of Hebrews explain the need for a perfect sacrifice and Jesus' fulfillment of that requirement, culminating in this: "...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:10
- 23 Romans 8:20-21
- 24 Deuteronomy 8:3; Amos 8:11; Matthew 4:4
- 25 John 1:1, 14; John 6:48-51
- 26 Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:3
- 27 1 Timothy 5:17
- 28 Exodus 20:8-11
- 29 2 Thessalonians 3:10 reminds us: "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat."
- 30 "muwth-muwth," Strong's' H4191
- 31 Dad also specified we should bury him "below plow depth, so I don't get turned up." Perhaps a little morbid, but as a farmer's son, I understood his meaning. We couldn't do it because by law we would

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have to license the cornfield as a cemetery, so he is buried in a legal cemetery not far from his fields.

32 Colossians 2:13-14

33 Hebrews 10:3-4 34 The distinction of “clean” animals is first made with Noah (Genesis 7:2) and from which he sacrificed (Genesis 8:20), although Abel earlier offered an acceptable sacrifice from the flock, presumably a lamb (Genesis 4:4) Leviticus 11 dictates which animals were “clean” or “unclean.”

35 Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 22:2

36 Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Hebrews 12:29 and Acts 2:3; Luke 13:29 respectively, and that's just a few references.

37 Romans 6:7